This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

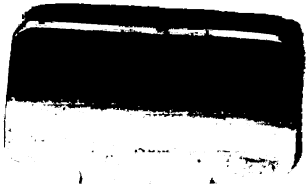
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

UC-NRLF
$B 299 228

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CALE YOUNG RICE



SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

960
R 4
C

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES DI TOCCA

A Trageay

By

Cale Young Rice

McClure, Phillips & Co.
New York
1903

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

COPYRIGHT, 1908, BY
CALE YOUNG RICE

Published, March, 1908, R

PS 3535
I22 C5
1903
MAIN

To My Wife

300370

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES DI TOCCA

A Tragedy

CHARLES DI TOCCA . .	*Duke of Leucadia, Tyrant of Arta, etc.*
ANTONIO DI TOCCA . .	*His son.*
HÆMON	*A Greek noble.*
BARDAS	*His friend.*
CARDINAL JULIAN . .	*The Pope's Legate.*
AGABUS	*A mad monk.*
CECCO	*Seneschal of the Castle.*
FULVIA COLONNA . .	*Under the duke's protection.*
HELENA	*Sister to Hæmon.*
GIULIA	*Serving Fulvia.*
PAULA	*Serving Helena.*
LYGIA, PHAON, ZOE, BASIL	*Revellers.*

NARDO, a boy, and DIOGENES, a philosopher.
A Captain of the Guard, Soldiers, Guests,
Attendants, etc.

Time: Fifteenth Century.

ACT ONE

Scene.—The Island Leucadia. A ruined temple of Apollo near the town of Pharo. Broken columns and stones are strewn, or stand desolately about. It is night—the moon rising. ANTONIO, *who has been waiting impatiently, seats himself on a stone. By a road near the ruins* FULVIA *enters, cloaked.*

ANTONIO (*turning*): Helen——!

FULVIA: A comely name, my lord.

ANTONIO: Ah, you?
My father's unforgetting Fulvia?

FULVIA: At least not Helena, whoe'er she be.

ANTONIO: And did I call you so?

FULVIA: Unless it is
These stones have tongue and passion.

ANTONIO: Then the night
Recalling dreams of dim antiquity's
Heroic bloom worked on me.—But whence are
Your steps, so late, alone?

FULVIA: From the Cardinal,
Who has but come.

ANTONIO: What comfort there?

FULVIA: With doom
The moody bolt of Rome broods over us.

ANTONIO: My father will not bind his heresy?

FULVIA: You with him walked to-day. What said he?

ANTONIO: I?
With him to-day? Ah, true. What may be done?

FULVIA: He has been strange of late and silent, laughs,
Seeing the Cross, but softly and almost
As it were some sweet thing he loved.

ANTONIO (*absently*): As if
'Twere some sweet thing—he laughs—is strange
—you say?

FULVIA: Stranger than is Antonio his son,
Who but for some expectancy is vacant.

(*She makes to go.*)

ANTONIO: Stay, Fulvia, though I am not in poise.
Last night I dreamed of you: in vain you hovered
To reach me from the coil of swift Charybdis.

(*A low cry,* ANTONIO *starts.*)

FULVIA: A woman's voice!

(*Looking down the road.*)

And hasting here!

ANTONIO: Alone?

FULVIA: No, with another!

ANTONIO: Go, then, Fulvia.
'Tis one would speak with me.

FULVIA: Ah? (*She goes.*)

Enter HELENA *frightedly with* PAULA.

HELENA: Antonio!

ANTONIO: My Helena, what is it? You are wan
And tremble as a blossom quick with fear
Of shattering. What is it? Speak.

HELENA: Not true!
O, 'tis not true!

ANTONIO: What have you chanced upon?

HELENA: Say no to me, say no, and no again!

ANTONIO: Say no, and no?

HELENA: Yes; I am reeling, wrung,
With one glance o'er the precipice of ill!
Say his incanted prophecies spring from
No power that's more than frenzied fantasy!

ANTONIO: Who prophesies? Who now upon this isle
More than visible and present day
Can gather to his eye? Tell me.

HELENA: The monk—
Ah, chide me not!—mad Agabus, who can

Unsphere dark spirits from their evil airs
And show all things of love or death, seized me
As hither I stole to thee. With wild looks
And wilder lips he vented on my ear
Boding more wild than both. "Sappho!" he cried,
"Sappho! Sappho!" and probed my eyes as if
Destiny moved dark-visaged in their deeps.
Then tore his rags and moaned, "So young, to cease!"
Gazed then out into awful vacancy;
And whispered hotly, following his gaze,
"The Shadow! Shadow!"

ANTONIO: This is but a whim,
A sudden gloomy surge of superstition.
Put it from you, my Helena.

HELENA: But he
Has often cleft the future with his ken,
Seen through it to some lurking misery

And mar of love: or the dim knell of death
Heard and revealed.

ANTONIO: A witless monk who thinks
God lives but to fulfil his prophecies!

HELENA: You know him not. 'Tis told in youth he loved
One treacherous, and in avenge made fierce
Treaty with Hell that lends him sight of all
Ills that arise from it to mated hearts!
Yet look not so, my lord! I'll trust thine eyes
That tell me love is master of all times,
And thou of all love master!

ANTONIO: And of thee?
Then will the winds return unto the night
And flute us lover songs of happiness!

HELENA: Nor dare upon a duller note while here
We tryst beneath the moon?

ANTONIO: My perfect Greek!
Athene looks again out of thy lids.
And Venus trembles in thy every limb!
HELENA: Not Venus, ah, not Venus!
ANTONIO: Now; again?
HELENA: 'Twas on this temple's ancient gate she found
Wounded Adonis dead, and to forget,
Like Sappho leaped, 'tis said, from yonder cliff
Down to the waves' oblivion below.
ANTONIO: And will you read such terror in a tale?
HELENA: Forgive me, then.
ANTONIO: Surely you are unstrung,
And yet there is—— (*Turns away from her.*)
HELENA: Is what? Antonio?
ANTONIO: Nothing: I who must ebb with you and flow
A little was moved.

HELENA: Not you, not you! I'll change
My tears to laughter, if but fantasy
May so unmettle you! Not moved, indeed!
Not moved, Antonio?

ANTONIO: Well, let us off,
My Helena, with these numb awes that wind
About our joy.

HELENA: Thy kiss then, for it can
Drive all gloom out of the world!

ANTONIO: And thine, my own,
On Fate's hard brow would shame it of all frown!

HELENA: Yet is thine mightier, for no frown can be
When no more gloom's in the world!

ANTONIO: But 'tis thy lips
That lend it might. If I pressed other——

HELENA: Other!
You should not know that any other lips

Could e'er be pressed; I'll have no kiss but his
Who is all blind to every mouth but mine!

(*Breaks from him.*)

ANTONIO: Oh?—Well.

HELENA: "Oh—well?"—Then it is well I go!

ANTONIO: Perhaps.

HELENA: "Perhaps!" (*Makes to go.*)

ANTONIO: Good-night.

HELENA (*returning*): Antonio——?

ANTONIO: Ah! still——?

HELENA: There's gloom in the world again.

ANTONIO (*kissing her*): 'Tis gone?

HELENA: Not all, I think.

ANTONIO: Two for so small a gloom?

(*Kisses her again.*)

HELENA: So small!

ANTONIO: And still you sigh?

HELENA: The vainest glooms

To-night seem ominous—as cloud-flakes flung
Upward before the heaving of the west.
(*In fright*) Oh!

ANTONIO: Helena!

HELENA: See, see! 'tis Agabus!

Enter AGABUS *unkempt and distracted.*

AGABUS: O—lovers! lovers! Lord have none of them!

ANTONIO: Good monk——

AGABUS: O—yes, yes, yes. You'd give me gold
To pray for your two souls. (*Crossing himself.*)
Not I! Not I!
Know you not love is brewed of lust and fire?
It gnaws and burns, until the Shadow—Sir,
(*Searching about the air.*)
Have you not seen a Shadow pass?

ANTONIO: A Shadow?

AGABUS: Silent and cold. A-times they call him Death:

I'd have him for my brain—it shakes with fever.

(Goes searching anxiously.

HELENA: Antonio——

ANTONIO: You're calm?

HELENA: Yes, very calm—
Of impotence—as one who in a tomb
Awakes and waits?

ANTONIO: He is but mad.

HELENA: But mad.

ANTONIO: Yet fear you? still?

(A shout is heard.)

HELENA: Who is it? soldiers come
From Arta?

ANTONIO: Yes.

HELENA: And by this road!—They must
Not see us!

ANTONIO: No. But quick, within this breach!

(They conceal themselves in the breach.

The soldiers pass across the stage. The last, as all shout "DI TOCCA!" *strikes a column near him. It falls, and* HELENA *starts forward shuddering.*)

HELENA: Fallen! Ah, fallen! See, Antonio!

ANTONIO: What now!

HELENA (*swaying*): It is as if the earth were wind
Under my feet!

ANTONIO: Are all things thus become
Omen and dread to you?

HELENA: O, but it is
The pillar grieving Venus leant upon
Ere to forget she leapt, and wrote,
When falls this pillar tall and proud
Let surest lovers weave their shroud.

ANTONIO: Mere myth!

HELENA: The shroud! It coldly winds about us—coldly!

ANTONIO: Should a vain hap so desperately move you?

HELENA: The breath and secret soul of all this night
Are burdened with foreboding! And it seems—

ANTONIO: You must not, Helena!

HELENA: My love, my lord—
Touch me lest I forget my natural flesh
In this unnatural awe! (*He takes her to him.*)
Ah how thy arms
Warm the cold moan and misery of fear
Out of my veins!

ANTONIO: You rave, but in me stir
Again the attraction of these dim portents.
Nay, quiver not! 'tis but a passing mist,
And this that runs in us is worthless dread!

HELENA: But ah, the shroud! the shroud!

ANTONIO: We'll weave no shroud,
But wedding robes and wreaths and pageantry!

And you shall be my Sappho—but through joys
Such as shall legend ecstasy about
Our knitted names when distant lovers dream.

HELENA: I'll fear no more, then——

ANTONIO: Yet?

HELENA: My lord, let us
Unloose this strangling secrecy and be
Open in love. My brother, Hæmon, let
Our hearts betrothed exchange and hope be told
Him and thy father!

ANTONIO: This cannot be—now.

HELENA: It cannot be, and you a god? I'll bow
Before your eyes no more!—say that it can!

ANTONIO: Not yet—not now. Hæmon's suspicious, quick,
And melancholy: must be won with service.
And you are Greek, a name till yesterday
I never knew pass in the portal to

My father's ear, but it came out his mouth
Headlong and dark with curses.

HELENA: Yet of late
He oft has smiled upon me as he passed.

ANTONIO: On you—my father? O, he only dreamt,
And saw you not.

HELENA: Then have you also dreamt!
He looked as you, when, moonlight in my hair,
You call me——

ANTONIO: Stay: I'll call you so no more.

HELENA: You'll call me so no more?

ANTONIO: No more.

HELENA: Why do
You say so—is it kind?

ANTONIO: Why?—why? Because
Words were they miracles of beauty could
As little reveal you as a taper's ray
The lone profundity and space of night!

HELENA: And yet——

ANTONIO: And yet?

HELENA: I'll hold you not too false
If sometimes they trip out upon your lips.

ANTONIO: Or to my father's eye?

HELENA: If he but look
Upon me for thy sake.

ANTONIO: He smiled, you say?

HELENA: Gently, as one might in forgetting pain.

ANTONIO: Perhaps: for some unwonted softness seems
Near him. But yesterday he called for song,
Dancing and wine.

HELENA: Then tell him! These are years
So dyed in crime that secrecy must seem
Yoke-mate of guilt.

ANTONIO: Fear has bewitched you—shame!

HELENA: Antonio, love's wave has cast us high:

I would do all lest now it turn to fate
Under our feet and draw us out——

ANTONIO: 'Twill not!

Enter PAULA.

PAULA: My lady, some one comes.

HELENA: And is the world
Not space enough but he must needs come here!
If it were——?

ANTONIO: Hæmon?—'Twere perhaps not ill.

HELENA: I know not! Broodings smoulder
from his moods
Feverous bitter.

ANTONIO: Kindness then shall quench them.
But now, away. Forget this dread and be you
By day my lark, by night my nightingale,
Not a sad bird of boding!

HELENA: With the day
All will be well.

ANTONIO: Remember then you are

Only a little stept from your life's shore
Out on the infinite of love, whose air
Is awe and mystery.

HELENA: I go, my lord.
Think of me oft!

ANTONIO (*taking her in his arms*): My Helena!

(*She goes with* PAULA. *He steps aside and watches the approaching forms.*)

'Tis Hæmon!
My father!

Enter CHARLES *friendly, with* HÆMON.

CHARLES: So, no farther? you'll stop here?

HÆMON: Sir, if you grant it. I——

CHARLES (*twittingly*): Some rendezvous?
Who is she? Ah, young blood and Spring and night!

HÆMON: No rendezvous, my lord.

CHARLES: Some lay then you
Would muse on?

HÆMON: Yes, a lay.

CHARLES: And one of love?
The word, you see, founts easy to my lips.
(*With confidential archness.*) 'Tis recent in my
thought—as you will learn.

HÆMON: How, sir, and when?

CHARLES: O, when? Be not surprised!—
Well, to the lay!

(*He goes.*

HÆMON: Cruel! His soldiers waste
The bread of honesty, the hope of age!
Are drunken, bloody, indolent, and lust
To tear all innocence away and robe
Our loveliest in shame!—Yet me, a Greek,
He suddenly befriends!

ANTONIO (*coming forward*): Hemon——

HÆMON: Ah, you?

ANTONIO: There's room between your tone and
courtesy.

HÆMON: And shall be while I'm readier to bend
Over a beggar's pain than prince's fingers.

ANTONIO: And yet you know me better——

HÆMON: Than to believe
You're not Antonio, son of Charles di Tocca?

ANTONIO: I'd be your friend.

HÆMON: So would he: and he smiles.

ANTONIO: There are deep reasons for it.

HÆMON: With him too!
Against a miracle, you are his heir!

ANTONIO: I think it would be well for you to
listen.
My confidence once curbed——

HÆMON: May bite and paw?
Let it! for fools are threats, and cowards. Were
You Tamerlane and mine the skull should cap
A bloody pyramid of enemies,
I'd——!

ANTONIO: Hear me. Will you be so blind?

HÆMON: To your
Fair graces? No, my lord—not so. Your sword
And doublet are sublimely worn! sublimely!
Your curls would tempt an empress' fingers,
and——

ANTONIO: Why is my anger silent?

HÆMON: Let it speak
And not this subtle pride! You would be
friend,
A friend to me—a friend!—Did not your father
Into a sick and sunless keep cast mine
Because he was a Greek and still a Greek,
And would not be a slave? His cunning has
Not whispered death about him as a pest?
He—he, my friend? and you?—And I on him
Should lean, and flatter——?

ANTONIO: Cease: though he has stains
The times are tyrannous and men like beasts
Find mercy preservation's enemy.

You're heated with suspicion and old wrong,
But take my hand as pledge——

HÆMON (*refusing it*): That you'll be false?

Enter BARDAS.

BARDAS: I've sought you, Hæmon. Antonio?
We are
Well met then: to your doors my want was bent
With a request.

ANTONIO: Which gladly I shall hear
And if I can will grant.

BARDAS: My haste is blunt—
As is my tongue.

HÆMON: Then yield it us at once,
Our mood is so.

BARDAS: Hæmon, I love your sister.
Not love: I am idolatrous before
Her foot's least print, and cannot breathe or pray
But where she's sometime been and left a heaven!

HÆMON: Therefore you'll cry it maudlin at the streets?

BARDAS: Necessity's not over delicate.
Antonio, sue for me. You have been apt
In all love's skill they say. My oath on it
Your words once sown upon her listening
Would not lie fruitless did they bid her yield
More than her most.

HÆMON: Bardas! Do you—Does such
Unseemliness run in your thought?

BARDAS: Peace, Hæmon.
Antonio, speak.

ANTONIO: You're strange in this request.
Helena, whom I've seen, would little thank
The eyes that told her own where they should love.

BARDAS: I saved your life, my lord.

ANTONIO: And I've besought
Occasion oft for loaning of some chance

Worthily to repay you. If 'tis this,
I am distrest. I cannot plead your suit.

BARDAS: You cannot or you will not?

ANTONIO: I have said.
Ask me for service on your foes, for gold,
Faith or devotion, friendship you're aloof to,
For all that will and honor well may render
With nicety, and I'll be wings and heart,
More—drudge to your desire.

HÆMON: Nobly, my lord!
Bardas, you must atone——

BARDAS: Peace, Hæmon.

HÆMON: Peace
Is goad and gall! Why do you burn my cheek
With this indignity?

BARDAS: Do you ask why? (*to* ANTONIO.)
A little since one of your father's guard
Gave his command in seal to Helena
Upon the streets, to instantly repair

Unto his halls—which she must henceforth *honor*.
You knew it not?

ANTONIO: My father?

BARDAS: O, well feigned.

Be sure none will suspect he is too old
For knightly feat like this—and that he has
A son!

ANTONIO: To Helena! my father! sealed!

HÆMON: Bardas, you bring the truth?—And so, my lord,
You stab me through another—you, my *friend?*

ANTONIO (*to* BARDAS): Do you mean that——?

BARDAS: Until this hour I held
The race of Charles di Tocca bold, or other
But empty of all lies in deed or speech,
It grows—a little low?

ANTONIO: Why you are mad!
Are mad! I'm naked of this thing, and hide
No guilt behind the wonder of my face.

For Paradises brimming with all Beauty
I would not lay one fancy's weight of shame
On her you name!

BARDAS: A pretty protest—but
A breath too heavenly.

ANTONIO: Leave sneering there!
You have repaid yourself—cast on me words
Intolerable more than loss of life.
You both shall learn this night's entangling.
But know, between her, Helena, and shame
I burn with flaming heart and fearless hand!

(*Goes angrily.*

HÆMON: He can be false and wear this mien of truth?

BARDAS: I'll not believe!

HÆMON: But, what: my sister seized?

BARDAS: Ah, what!—"He burns with flaming heart!"—have we
No flesh to understand this passion then?

Bound to the wings of wide ambition he
Will choose undowered worth?—To the ordeal
Of mere suspicion's flaming I'd not trust
The fairness of his name; but doubts in me
Are sunk with proofs.

HÆMON: No, no!

BARDAS: Unyielding.

HÆMON: Proof?

He could not. No! he dare not!

BARDAS: Yet the rogue
Cecco, the duke's half-seneschal, half-spy,
I passed upon the streets o'ermuch in wine,
Leaning upon a tipsier jade and spouting
With drunken mockery,
"'Sweet Helena! Fair Helena!' Pluck me,
wench, but the lord Antonio knows sound nuts!
And sly! Why hear you now! he gets the duke
to seize on the maid! The fox! The rat!
Have I not heard him in his chamber these

thirty nights puff her name out his window with as many honeyed drawls of passion as—as—as—June has buds? 'Sweet Helena!'—la! 'Fair Helena!'—O! 'Dear Helena! my rose! my queen! my sun and moon and stars! Thy kiss is still at my lips, thy breast beats still on mine! my Helena!'—Um! Oh, 'tmust be a rare damsel. I'll make a sluice between her purse and mine, wench; do you hear?"

HÆMON: Well—well?

BARDAS: No more. When I had struck him down,
He swore it was unswerving all and truth.
Hasting to warn I found Helena ta'en
And sought you here.

HÆMON (*grasping his brows*): Ah!

BARDAS: Helena who is
All purity!

HÆMON: Ah sister, child!—Have I

With strength been father and with tenderness
A mother been to her unfolding years
But to see now unchastest cruelty
Pluck her white bloom to ease his idle sense
One fragrant hour ?—If it be so, no flowers
Should blossom ; only weeds whose withering
Can hurt no heart !

BARDAS : These tears should seal fierce oaths
Against him !

HÆMON : And they shall ! until God wrecks
Him in the tempest raised of his outrage !

BARDAS : Then may I be the rock on which he breaks !

But hear ; who comes ? (*Revellers are heard approaching.*)
We must aside until
This mirth is past. (*They conceal themselves.*)

Enter revellers dressed as bacchanals and bacchantes, dancing and singing.

Bacchus, hey! was a god, hei-yo!
The vine! a fig for the rest!
With locks green-crowned and lips red-warm—
The vine! the vine's the best!
He loved maids, O-o-ay! hei-yo!
The vine! a maiden's breast!
He pressed the grape, and kissed the maid!—
The cuckoo builds no nest!

(*All go dancing, except* LYDIA *and* PHAON, *who clasps and kisses her passionately*)

LYDIA (*breaking from him*): Do you think kisses are so cheap? You must know mine fill my purse! A pretty gallant from Naples, with laces and silks and jewels gave me this ring last year for but one. And another lover from Venice gave me this (*a bracelet*)—but he looked so sad when he gave it. Ah, his eyes! I'd not have cared if he had given me naught.

PHAON: Here, here, then! (*Offers jewel.*)

LYDIA (*putting it aside*): They say the ladies in Venice ride with their lovers through the streets all night in boats: and the very moon shines more passionately there. Is it true?

PHAON: Yes, yes. But kiss me, Lydia! Take this jewel—my last. Be mine to-night, no other's! We'll prate of Venice another time.

LYDIA: Another time we'll prate of kisses. I'll not have the jewel.

PHAON: Not have it! Now you're turning nun! a soft and virgin, silly nun! With a gray gown to hide these shoulders that—shall I whisper it?

LYDIA: Devil! they're not! A nice lover called them round and fair last night. And I've been sick! And—I—cruel! cruel! cruel! (*Revellers are heard returning.*) There, they're coming.

PHAON: Never mind, my girl. But you mustn't scorn a man's blood when it's afire.

Re-enter Revellers singing

Bacchus, hey! was a god, hei-yo! etc.

(*After which all go, except* ZOE *and* BASIL.

ZOE: O! O! O! but 'tis brave! Wine, Basil! Wine, my knight, my Bacchus! Ho! ho! my god! you wheeze like a cross-bow. Is it years, my wooer, years?—Ah! (*She sighs.*)

BASIL: Sighs—sighs! Now look for showers.

ZOE: Basil—you were my first lover—except the duke Charles. Ah, did you see how that Helena looked when they gave her the duke's command? I was like that once. (HÆMON *starts forward.*)

BASIL: Fiends, nymphs, and saints! it's come! tears in your eyes! Zoe, stop it. Would you have mine leak and drive me to a monastery for shelter!

ZOE (*sings sadly and absently*):

She lay by the river, dead,
A broken reed in her hand—

A nymph whom an idle god had wed
And led from her maidenland.

BASIL: O, had I been born a heathen!

ZOE: He told me, Basil, I should live, a great lady, at his castle. And they should kiss my hand and courtesy to me. He meant but jest—I feared—I feared! But—I loved him!

BASIL: Now, my damsel—!

ZOE (*sings*):

The god was the great god Jove,
Two notes would the bent reed blow,
The one was sorrow, the other love
Enwove with a woman's woe.

BASIL: Songs and snakes! Give me instead a Dominican's funeral! I'd as lief crawl bare-kneed to Rome and mouth the Pope's heel. O blessed Turks with their remorseless harems!—Zoe!

ZOE (*sings*):

She lay by the river dead:
And he at feasting forgot.
The gods, shall they be disquieted
By dread of a mortal's lot?

(*She wipes her eyes, trembles, looks at him and laughs hysterically.*)

Bacchus! my Bacchus! with wet eyes! Up, up, lad! there's many a cup for us yet!

(*They go, she leading and singing.*

He loved maids, O-o-ay! hei-yo!
The vine! a maiden's breast! etc.

(HÆMON *and* BARDAS *look at each other, then start after them terribly moved.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT TWO

Scene.—An audience hall in the castle of CHARLES DI TOCCA; *the next afternoon. The dark stained walls have been festooned with vines and flowers. On the left is the ducal throne. On the right sunlight through high-set windows. In the rear heavily draped doors. Enter* CHARLES, *who looks around and smiles with subtle content, then summons a servant.*

Enter servant.

CHARLES: The princess Fulvia.

SERVANT: She comes, sir, now.

(*Goes.*

Enter FULVIA.

FULVIA: My lord, flowers and vines upon these walls

That seem always in dismal memory
And mist of grief? What means it?

CHARLES: That sprung up,
A greedy multitude upon the fields,
Citron and olive were left hungry, so
I quelled them!

FULVIA: Magic ever dwells in flowers
To waft me back to childhood. (*Taking some.*)
Poor pluckt buds
If they could speak like children torn from the breast.

CHARLES: You're full of sighs and pity then?

FULVIA: Yes, and—
Of doubt.

CHARLES: What so divides you?

FULVIA: Helena—
This Greek—I do not understand.

CHARLES: Nor guess?
You have not seen nor spoken to her?

FULVIA: No.

CHARLES: We'll have her. (*Motions servant.*)
Go. Say that we wait her here,
The lady Helena. (*Servant goes.*
She's frighted—thinks
'Tmay be her father found too deep a rest
Within our care: yet has a hope that holds
The tears still from her lids. I've smiled on her,
Smiled, Fulvia, and she—Why do you cloud?

FULVIA: I would this were undone.

CHARLES: Undone? Undone?
You would it were——?

Enter HELENA.

Ah, Greek! Our Fulvia,
Who is as heart and health about our doors,
Has speech for you. And polities
Untended groan for me. (*He goes.*

FULVIA (*looking sadly at her*): Girl—child—

HELENA: Why do
You call me so with struggle on your breast?

FULVIA: You're very fair.

HELENA: And was so free I thought
The world brimmed up with my full happiness.

FULVIA: But find it is a sieve to all but grief?

HELENA: Is it then grief? I have not any tears,
Yet seem girt by an emptiness that aches,
Surrounds and whispers what I dare not think
Or, shapened, see.

FULVIA: It stains too as a shroud
The morrow's face?

HELENA: You look at me—I think
You look at me, as if——?

FULVIA: No child.

HELENA: Why am
I in this place? You fear for me?

FULVIA: Fear?

HELENA: Yes!
A dumb dread trembles from you sufferingly.

FULVIA: It is not fear. Or—no!—has vanished quite,
Ashamed of its too naked idleness.

HELENA (*shuddering*): He cannot, will not!—
Yet you feared!

FULVIA: Be calm:
Beauty is better so.

HELENA: Ah, you are cold!
See a great shadow reach and wrap at me,
Yet lend no light! By gentleness I pray you,
What said he?

FULVIA: Child——

HELENA: Child!—Ah, a moment's dread
Brings age on us!—If not by gentleness,
Then by that love that women bear to men,
By happiness too fleeting to tread earth,
I pray you tell the fear your heart so hides!

FULVIA: You are the guest of Charles di Tocca.

HELENA: Guest?
Ah, guests are bidden, not commanded.—Where,
Where can Antonio be gone. All day
No token, quieting!

FULVIA: Antonio, girl?
Antonio?—Is it true?

Re-enter CHARLES.

CHARLES: So eager?—Truth
Has brewed more tears than lies. But, Fulvia,
Why doth it mated with Antonio's name
Wring thus your troubled hands?

FULVIA: My lord——

CHARLES: You falter?
No matter—now. (*To* HELENA.) But you, my fair one, put
More merriment upon your lips and lids,
And this (*giving pearls*) upon the lustre of your throat.
Hither our guests come soon. Be with us then,

And at your beauty's best. Now; trembling so?—
Yet is the lily lovelier in the wind!

(*He looks after, musingly, as she goes.*

FULVIA: My lord——

CHARLES: True, Fulvia—as titles go.

FULVIA: My lord——

CHARLES: Twice—but I'm not two lords.

FULVIA: To-night
I think you are. But quench your jests.

CHARLES: In tears?
And groans? Where borrow them?

FULVIA (*turning away*): So let it be.

CHARLES: Why do you say so be it and sigh as
Nought could again be well?

FULVIA: O——

CHARLES: Now you frown?

FULVIA: The hope you nurse, then, if it prove
a pang
Of serpent bitterness——

CHARLES: Prove pang? I then
But for an "if" must pluck it from me?

FULVIA: So
I must believe.

CHARLES: Pluck it from me! Will you—
Now will you have me mouth and foam and thresh
The quiet in me to a maelstrom! This
Is mine, this joy; and still is mine, though I
To keep it must bring on me bitterness
And bleeding and—I rage!

FULVIA: Then shall I cease,
And say no more? No, you are on a flood
Whose sinking may be rapid down to horror.
And she—this girl! It has been long since you
Gave license rein upon your will, and spur.
Do not so now.

CHARLES: License?

FULVIA: She is all morn
And dream and dew: make her not dark!

CHARLES: You think—!

FULVIA: Wake her not, ah, not suddenly on terror!

CHARLES: On terror! (*Laughing.*)

FULVIA: You've laughed nobler.

CHARLES: Fulvia,

Friend of my unrepaying years, dream you
I who in empire youth too soon forgot,
Who on my brow surprise the wafted dew,
The presages of age and death, shake not?

FULVIA: I knew not, but have waited oft such words.

CHARLES: Ah what! this hope, this leaping in me, this
White dawn across my turbulence and night,
From license?—Hear me. I have sudden found
A door to let in heaven on my heart.
Had I not laughed to see your dread upon it
Write "license," perilous had been my frown.

FULVIA: You will——?

CHARLES: Yes—yes! About her brow shall curl
The coronet! Her wishes shall be sceptres
Waving a swift fulfilment to her feet!
Her pity shall leave ready graves unfilled,
Her anger open earth for all who offend!
She shall——

FULVIA: Ah cease, infatuate man! Will you
Build kingdoms on the wind, and empires on
A girl's ungiven heart?

CHARLES (*slowly*): Unto such love
As mine all things are given.

FULVIA: All things but love.

CHARLES: Stood she not as in pleading? Yes
—and to
Her cheeks came hurried roses from her heart.
And her large eyes, did they not drift to mine
Caressing?—yet as if in them they found
The likeness of some visitant dear dream.

FULVIA : The likeness of some dream ?

CHARLES : Question no more.

She is set in the centre of my need
As youth and fiercest passion could not set her.
Supernally as May she has burst on
My barren age. Pain, envious decay,
And doubt that mystery wounds us with, and wrong,
Flee from the gleam and whisper of her name.

FULVIA : And if your coronet and heat avail
Not with her as might charm of equal years
And beauty ?

CHARLES: Then—why then—why there may slip
An avalanche of raging and despair
Out of me ! Hope of her once taken, all
The thwarted thunders of my want would rush
Into the void with lightnings for revenge !

Enter ANTONIO.

ANTONIO : Sir, I'm returned.

CHARLES: With lightnings that shall—(*Sees him.*) You?

Antonio? My eyes had other thought.

Open your news—but mind 'tis not of failure.

ANTONIO: We seized the murderous robbers in their cove

And o'er the cliff, as our just law commands,

To death flung them.

CHARLES: So with all traitors be it.

ANTONIO: So should it.

CHARLES: Well, 'twas swift. In you there is

More than your mother's gentleness.

ANTONIO: Else were

My name di Tocca, sir, and not myself.

CHARLES: You have my love.—But as you came met you

The cardinal?

ANTONIO: So close he should by this

Be at our gates.

CHARLES: He'll miss no welcome, and—
Perhaps—we shall— (*Smiles on them.*) Give me
that cross you wear,
My Fulvia. It may——

ANTONIO: Sir, this is good!
We earnestly beseech of you to hear
The Pope's embassador with yielding.

CHARLES: Ah?—
But you, boy, draw out of this solitude
And musing moodiness. You should think but
On silly sighs and kisses, rhymes and trysts!
Must I yet teach your coldness youth?
(*A trumpet, and sound of opening gates.*)
Draw out!

ANTONIO: I have to-day desired some words of
this.

Enter CECCO.

CHARLES: Well, who——?

CECCO: The Cardinal, your grace.

CHARLES: Then go,
And bid our guests. Bring too Diogenes,
Our most amusing raveller of all
Philosophies. Say that the duke, his brother,
Humbly desires it! (CECCO *goes.*

FULVIA: And Helena?

CHARLES (*to* ANTONIO): Why do
You start, sir?—Fulvia, we must look to
This callow god our son. Yet, had our court
Two eyes of loveliness to drown his heart,
I'd think on oath 'twere done.

(*Goes to the throne.*)

FULVIA (*low to* ANTONIO): Listen. No word
Of Helena!

CHARLES: Now! is it secrets?

FULVIA: Sir,
He scorns to spill a drop of confidence
On my too thirsty questions.

CHARLES: Does he so
Tightly seal up his spirits?

FULVIA: Put the rogue
To prison on stale bread, my lord: I half
Believe he's full of treasons.

CHARLES (*laughing*): Do you hear!
Because you are the son and scout our foes
Justice is not impossible upon you!

The guests enter, among them HÆMON *and* BARDAS, *following the* CARDINAL JULIAN *and his suite, and last* HELENA, *whom* FULVIA *leads aside.*

CARDINAL: Peace, worthy duke!

CHARLES: And more, lord Cardinal,
We would to-day enlarge our worthiness
With you and with great Rome.

CARDINAL: Firmly I crave
It may be so.

CHARLES: Here unto all our guests
We then do disavow our heresies——
For faith's as air, as ease to life—and seek
At your absolving lips release from our
Rough disobedience. Nor shall we shun
The lash and needed weight of penitence.

(*A murmur of approval.*)

JULIAN: These words, great lord, fall wise and soothing well.
Who so confesses, plants beneath his foot
A step to scale all impotence and wrong.
Our royal Pope's conditions shall be told,
Pledge them consenting seal and you shall be
Briefly and fully free. (*Motions his secretary.*)

SECRETARY (*opens and reads*): "Whereas the duke
Di Tocca has offended——"

CARDINAL: Pass the offence.
Be it oblivion's. On, the penalty.

SECRETARY: "Therefore the duke di Tocca
humbling himself
Must pay into our vaults two hundred ducats—"

CHARLES: It shall be three.

SECRETARY: "And send a hundred men
Armed 'gainst the foes that threaten Italy."

CHARLES: See to it, yes, Antonio, ere a dawn.

SECRETARY: "He must also yield up the princess Fulvia
Who's fled her father's house and rightful marriage."

FULVIA (*to* JULIAN): You told me not of this
—no word, my lord!

CARDINAL: My silence as my speech is not my own.

CHARLES: We'll more of it—a measure more. Read on.

SECRETARY: "And for the better amity and weal

Of Italy and Christ's most Holy Church,
He is enjoined to wed with Beatrice
Of Florence. If his wilful boldness grants
Obedience, his sins shall melt to rest
Under the calm of full forgiveness. He——"

CHARLES: A mild, a courteous, O a modest
Pope!
I must tear from my happiness a friend
Who fled a father's searing cruelty,
And cast her back in the flames! And I must bind
My crippled years that fare toward the grave
In the cold clasp of an unloving hand!
No! No!
Then, sir, and Cardinal, 'tis not enough!
I pray you swift again to Rome and plead
Most suppliantly that I for penance may
Swear my true son is shame-begot, or lend
My kin to drink clean of its fouling damp
Some pestilent prison! And 'tis impious too

That any still should trust my love. Beseech
His Holiness' command for death upon them!

CARDINAL: This is your answer?

CHARLES (*rises*): A mite! a mite of it!
The rest is I will wed where I will wed
Though every hill of earth raise up its pope
To bellow at me thunderous damnation!
I will—I will— (*Falls back convulsed.*)

FULVIA (*hastening to him*): Charles, ah! Wine for him, wine! (*It is brought.*)

ANTONIO: Lord Cardinal, spare yourself more and go.
You shall learn if a change may loose this strain.

(*The* CARDINAL *goes with his suite amid timid reverence.*)

CHARLES (*struggling*): I will—this frenzy—off my throat—! I— (*Recovering.*) Ah,
Thou, Fulvia? 'Twas as a fiend swung on me.
And shame! fear oozes out upon my brow,

And I——. (*Rises and calms himself.*) Forgive,
friends, this so sudden wrench
Upon your pleasure. One too quick made saint,
Stands feebly: but at once will I atone.
Where is Diogenes—where is he? His
Tangled fantastic wisdom shall divert us.
(DIOGENES, *who has stood unconscious of all that has passed, is pushed forward.*)
Ah, peer of Socrates and perfect Plato,
Leave your unseeing silence now and tell us——
Enter AGABUS *gazing anxiously and wildly before him.*
Who's this?
AGABUS (*hoarsely*): Where went he—the Shadow?
—whither?
CHARLES: Who's this broke from his grave upon us?
AGABUS (*searching still*): Where?
I followed him—he sped and there was cold!

Behind him blows a horror!

(*Stops in fascinated awe before* HELENA.)

Ah, on her head!

His touch! his earthless finger!—and she rots

To dust! to dust!

ANTONIO: Ill monk! are there no men

That you must wring a woman so with fear?

AGABUS: Ha, men? Christ save all men but lovers! all! (*Crosses himself.*)

CHARLES: Antonio, how speaks he?

ANTONIO: Sir, most mad

With the pestilence of evil prophecy.

(*To guards.*) Forth with him!

CHARLES: Stay.

ANTONIO: Let him not, for he will

Beguile you to some ravening belief.

AGABUS (*going up to* CHARLES, *staring at him in suppressed excitement*): A lover! a lover! and he loves in vain!

Wilt go? There is a cave—(*taking his hand*), we'll curse her—come!

CHARLES: Out! out! (*Throws him from the dais.*)

AGABUS: Christ save all men but— (*Seeking vacantly.*) Ah, the Shadow!
Has no one seen him? none?—the Shadow? none?

(*Goes dazed. Guests whisper, awed.*

CHARLES: He is obsessed—vile utterly!

A GUEST: O duke,
I pray, good-night.

ANOTHER: And I, my lord.

ANOTHER: And I——

ANOTHER: And——

CHARLES: Friends, you shall not—no. This pall will pass,
My hospitality is up, you shall not!

ANOTHER: Pardon, O duke, we——

CHARLES: Though some grudging wind
Blows us away from mirth, 'tis still in view,
We've lute and dance that yet shall bring us in.

1ST LADY: O, dance!

CHARLES: Cecco, our Circes from the Nile.

(CECCO *goes.*

2D LADY: The Nile! Ah, Cleopatra's Nile?

CHARLES: Her own;
And sinuous as Nile water is their grace.

Enter two Egyptian girls, who dance, then go.

GUESTS (*applauding*): Bravely!—O, brave!

CHARLES: Do they not whirl it lithe?
With limbs like swallow wings upon the blue?

1ST LADY: 'Twas witchery!

3D LADY: Such eyes! such hair!

2D LADY: And thus,
Did Cleopatra thus steal Antony?
Wrap him about with motion that would seize

His senses to an ecstasy? O, oh,
To dance so!

CHARLES: And so steal an Antony?

We'll frame a law on thieving of men's heart's!

2D LADY: Then, vainly! 'tis a theft men like the most.

CHARLES: When in its stead the thief has left her own—

But shall we woo no boon of mirth save dance?

A lute! a lute! (*One is gone for.*) Some new lay, Hæmon, come!

And every word must dip its syllables
In Pindar's spring to trip so lightly forth.

HÆMON: I have no lay.

CHARLES: The lute! (*It is offered* HÆMON.)
Sing us of love
That builds a Paradise of kisses, thinks
The Infinite bound up in an embrace.

Whose sighs seem to it hurricanes of pain,
Whose tears as seas of molten misery.

HÆMON: I have none—cannot.

CHARLES: Now will you fright off
Again our timid cheer?

HÆMON: While she, my sister—!

(*The lute is offered again.*)

I cannot, will not!

CHARLES: Will not? will not? Look!
I had an honor pluckt to laurel it,
A wreath of noble worth, a thing to tell——

HÆMON: Honor upon dishonor sits not well.

CHARLES (*not hearing*): Heat me not with denial. Is new bliss
Raised from the dead in me but to fall back
As stone ere it has breathed? Have I so frequent
Drained you? Be slow to tempt me—In me moves
Peril that has a passion to leap forth!

HÆMON: Antonio, speak! Where's innocence
and where
Begins deceit?

FULVIA (*to* HÆMON *aside*): Ask it not, or you step
On waiting hazard and calamity.

CHARLES: New fret? and new confusion? In
the blind
Power and passing of this night is there
Conspiracy?—plot of some here? or of
That One whose necromancy wields the world?
I care not!—I care not! We must have mirth!
Have mirth! though it be laughter at damned
souls.

HÆMON: And I must wake it? I with laugh
and lay,
Doting upon dishonor?

CHARLES: What means he?

HÆMON: Give me again my sister from these
walls,

Since might is yours, strip from me wealth and life
And more, and all—but let her not, no, no,
Meet here the touch and leprosy of shame!

CHARLES (*laughing*): Said I not, said I, friends, we should have mirth?

You shall laugh with me laughter bright as wine.

ANTONIO: But, sir, this is not good for laughter! Sir!

HÆMON (*to* ANTONIO): Ah, put the lamb on—bleat mock sympathy!

CHARLES (*still laughing*): Fulvia, O, he foots it in the tracks

Of your own fear! and wanders to delusion!

HÆMON: Will you laugh at me, fiend!

CHARLES: Boy!

HÆMON: Had I but

Omnipotence a moment and could dash
Annihilation on you and your race!

(*Throws his glove in* ANTONIO'S *face.*)

HELENA: Hæmon!

FULVIA (*restraining her*): No, Helena.

CHARLES: Omnipotence?
And could Omnipotence make such a fool?
There must be two Gods in the world to do it.

HÆMON: She shall not——!

(*Attempts to kill* HELENA.)

ANTONIO (*preventing*): Fury!—Ah! what would you do?

CHARLES: Such things can be? A sister, yet he strikes? (HÆMON *is seized.*)

HELENA: O let me speak with him, sir, let me speak!

CHARLES: Not now, girl, no, not now—lest in his breath
Be venom for thee! (*To soldiers.*) Shut him from our gates
Till he repent this fever.

(HÆMON *goes quietly out.*)

(*To guests who are suspicious and undetermined.*) If you stare so
Will the skies stop! Have I not arm in arm
Friended this youth and meant him honor still?
Leave me. I had a thing to tell; but it
Must wait more seasonable festivity.
(*To* PAULA.) See to thy mistress, child. Antonio, stay.

(*All go but* ANTONIO *and* CHARLES, *who leaves his chair slowly and with dejection.*)

ANTONIO: Father——

CHARLES (*unheeding*): Did I not humble me?

ANTONIO: Father——?

CHARLES: Or ask more than a brevity of joy
To bud on my life's withering close?

ANTONIO: But, sir——!

CHARLES: If it bud not——!

ANTONIO: What thought impels and wrings
These angers from your eyes?

CHARLES (*slowly, gazing at him*): You're like your mother.

ANTONIO: In trouble for your peace, more than in feature.

CHARLES: Peace—peace? Antonio, a dream has come:
To stir—to wake—to learn it is a dream—
I must not, will not look on such abyss.
You love me, boy?

ANTONIO: Sir, well: you cannot doubt it.

CHARLES: There has been darkness in me—and it seems
Such night as would put out a heaven of hope,
Quench an eternity of flaming joy!
I have sunk down under the world and hit
On nethermost despair: flown blind across
An infinite unrest!

ANTONIO: Forget it, now.

CHARLES: Had I drunk Lethe's all 'twould
not have stilled
The crying of my desolation's want.
Within me tenderness to iron turned,
Gladness to worm and gloom.—But 'tis o'erpast.
A rift, a smile, a breath has come—blown me
From torture to an ecstasy.

ANTONIO: To——?

CHARLES: Ecstasy!
Such as surrounds Hyperion on his sun,
Or Pleiads sweeping seven-fold the night.

ANTONIO: And you—this breath——?

CHARLES: Is—you are pale!
And press your lips from trembling!

ANTONIO: No—yes—well—
This ecstasy?

CHARLES: Is love! is love that— How?
You feign! distress and groaning tear in you!

ANTONIO: No. She you love——

CHARLES: O, Eve new-burst on Eden,
All pure with the prime beauty of God's breath,
Was not so!

ANTONIO: She is Helena?—the Greek?

CHARLES: She—Still you do not ail?—Yes,
Helena,
Who—But you are not well and cannot share
This ravishment!—I will not ask it—now.
This ravishment!—Ah, she has stayed the tread
And stilled the whispering of death: has called
Echoes of youth from me! and all I feared. . . .
I think—you are not well. Shall we go in?

CURTAIN.

ACT THREE

Scene.—The gardens of the castle. Paths meet under a large lime in the centre, where seats are placed. The wall of the garden crosses the rear, and has a postern. It is night of the same day, and behind a convent on a near hill the moon is rising. A nightingale sings.

Enter GIULIA, CECCO, *and* NALDO.

GIULIA : That bird! Always so noisy, always vain
Of gushing. Sing, and sing, sing, sing, it must!
As if nobody else would speak or sleep.

CECCO : Let the bird be, my jaunty. 'Tis no lie
The shrew and nightingale were never friends.

GIULIA : No more were shrew and serpent.

CECCO : Well what would
You scratch from me?

GIULIA: If there is anything
To be got from you, then it must be scratched.

CECCO: Yet shrews do not scratch serpents.

GIULIA: If they're caught
Where they can neither coil nor strike?

CECCO: Well, *I*
Begin to coil.

GIULIA: And I'll begin to scotch
You ere 'tis done.—Give me the postern key.

CECCO: Your lady's voice—but you are not your lady.

GIULIA: And were I you not long would be your lord's.
Give me the key.

CECCO: I coil—I coil! will soon
Be ready for a strike, my tender shrew.

GIULIA: Does the duke know you've hidden from his ear

Antonio's passion? does he?—ah?—and shall
I tell him? ah?

CECCO: You heard then——

GIULIA: He likes well
What's kept so thriftily.

CECCO (*scowling*): You want the key
To let in Boro to chuck your baby face
And moon with you! He's been discharged—
take care.

GIULIA: The duke might learn, too, you're not
clear between
His ducats and your own.

CECCO: There then (*gives key*), but——

GIULIA (*as he goes*): Oh?
And shrews do not scratch serpents? You may spy,
But others are not witless, I can tell you!

(CECCO *goes.*

Now, Naldo (*gives him key and writing*), do not
lose the writing. But

Should you, he must not come till two. For 'tis
At twelve the Greek will meet Antonio.

(NALDO *goes, through the postern:* GIULIA *to the castle.*

Enter HELENA *and* PAULA *from another part of the gardens.*

HELENA: At twelve, said he, at twelve, beside the arbor?

PAULA: Yes, mistress.

HELENA: I were patient if the moon
Would slip less sadly up. She is so pale—
With longing for Endymion her lover.

PAULA: Has she a lover? Oh, how strange. Is it
So sweet to love, my lady? I have heard
Men die and women for it weep themselves
Into the grave—yet gladly.

HELENA: Sweet? Ah, yes,

To terror! for the edge of fate cares not
How quick it severs.

PAULA: On my simple hills
They told of one who slew herself on her
Dead lover's breast. Would you do so?
Would you, my lady?

HELENA: There's no twain in love.
My heart is in my lord Antonio's
To beat, Paula, or cease with it.

PAULA: But died
He far away?

HELENA: Far sunders flesh not souls.
Across all lands the hush of death on him
Would sound to me; and, did he live, denial,
Though every voice and silence spoke it, could
Not reach my rest!—But he is near.

PAULA: O no,
Not yet, my lady.

HELENA: Then some weariness

Has pluckt the minutes' wings and they have crept.

PAULA: But 'tis not twelve, else would we hear the band
Of holy Basil from their convent peace
Dreamily chant.

HELENA: Nay, hearts may hear beyond
The hark of ears! Listen! to me his step
Thrills thro' the earth.

(ANTONIO *approaches and enters the postern.*)

'Tis he! Go Paula, go:
But sleep not.

(PAULA *hastens out.*)

(*Going to him.*) My Antonio, I breathe,
Now no betiding fell athwart thy path
To stay thee from me!

ANTONIO: Stronger than all betiding
This hour has reached and drawn me yearning to thee! (*Takes her in his arms.*)

HELENA: And may all hours!

ANTONIO: All! tho' we two will still
Be more than destiny—which cannot grasp
Beyond the grave.

HELENA: 'Tis sadly put, my lord.

ANTONIO: Ah, sadly, loathly; but, my Helena—

HELENA: I would not sink from it, the simple sun—
Fade to a tomb! What dirging hast thou heard
To mind thee of it?

ANTONIO: Love is a bliss too bright
To rest on earth. With it God should give us
Ever to soar above mortality.
But you must know——!

HELENA: Not yet, tell me not yet!
Dimly I see the burden in your eyes,
But dare not take it yet into my own.
Let us a little look upon the moon,
Forgetting. (*They seat themselves.*)

ANTONIO (*musingly*): These hands—this hair—
(*Caressing them.*)

HELENA: Like a farewell
Your touch falls on them.

ANTONIO (*moved*): To a father yield them?

HELENA: Antonio?

ANTONIO (*still caressing*): No, no! It cannot be!

HELENA: This dread—and shrinking—let me have it!—speak!
You mean—look on me!—mean, your father?—

ANTONIO: Ah!
It must not! must not!

HELENA: Do you mean—he—No!
Let him not touch me even in thy thought,
To me come nearer than a father may!

ANTONIO: He's swept by the sweet contagion of you, wrapt
In a fierce spell by your effulgent youth.

HELENA: Say, say it not! To him I but
smiled up—
But smiled!
ANTONIO: He knew not that such smiles could
dawn
In a bare world. And now is flame; would
take
Your tenderness into his arms and hear
Seized to him the warm music of your heart.
O, I could be for him—he is my father—
Prometheus stormed and gnawed on Caucasus,
Tantalus ever near the slipping wave,
Or torn and tossed to burning martyrdom—
But not—not this!
HELENA: Then, flight! In it we may
Find haven and new nurture for our bliss.
ANTONIO: Snap from his hunger this one hope,
so he

Must starve? Push him who has but learned
there's light
Back into yawning blindness? Ah, not flight!

HELENA: I know he is your father, and my days
Have been all fatherless, tho' I have made
Me child to every wind that had caress
And to each lonely tree of the deep wood—
Oft envious of those who touch gray hairs,
Or spend desire on filial grief and pang.
And most have you a softness in him kept,
Been to him more than empire's tyranny—
But baffled none can measure him nor trust!

ANTONIO: Yet must we wait.

HELENA: When waiting shall but goad
The speed of peril?

ANTONIO: Still: and strain to win
Him from this brink.—If vainly, then birth, pity,
And memory shall fall from me!—all, all,
But fierceness for thy peace!

HELENA: My Antony!

ANTONIO: And fierceness without falter!

HELENA: I am thine,
Thine more than immortality is God's!
Hear, does the nightingale not tell it thee?
The stars do they not tremble it, the moon
Murmur it argently into thine eyes?

ANTONIO: Ah, sorceress! You need but breathe to put
Abysm from us; but build words to float us
On infinite ecstasy. (*Kisses her.*)

HELENA: How, how thy kisses
Sing in me!

ANTONIO: From my heart they do but send
Echoes born of thy beauty mid its strings!

HELENA: Then would I lean forever at thy lips,
Lose no reverberance, no ring, no waft,
Hear nothing everlastingly but them!

(*A mournful chant is borne from the Convent. They slowly unclasp, awed.*)

CHARLES: Sleep is ever mate
Of peace and should go with it. I have slept
In the wild arms of battle when the winds
Of souls departing fearfully shook by,
And on the breast of dizzy danger cradled
Softly been lulled. Potions should be for them
Who wrestle and are thrown by misery.

CECCO: And is my lord at peace?

CHARLES: Strangely.—Yet seem
For sleep too coldly calm.

CECCO: So were you, sir—
I keep your words lest you may need of them—
On the same night young Hæmon's father went
The secret way to death.

CHARLES: Of that!—of that?—

CECCO: Pardon, I but——

CHARLES: Smirker!—Yet, was it so?
That night indeed?

CECCO: Sir, surely.

CHARLES: And the moon's
'Scutcheon hung stainless up the purple east?

CECCO: Half, sir; even as now.

CHARLES (*as to himself*): Since that hour's close
To this I have not stood in so much calm.
Still was he not in every vein of him,
And breath, a traitor? A Greek who—I'll not
say it,
Since she is Greek I must forget the word
Sounds the diapason of perfidy.

CECCO: My lord thinks of the gentle Helena?

CHARLES: And if I do?

CECCO: Why, sir——

CHARLES: Well?

CECCO: Nothing: but——

CHARLES: Subtle! your nothing harboreth
some theft
Of spial.

CECCO: Sir, I—no—that is——

CHARLES: That is
It does! Must I—persuade it from your throat?
(*Makes to choke him.*)

CECCO: It was of lord Antonio——

CHARLES: Speak then.

CECCO: Have you not marked him sundry of his moods?

CHARLES: Well?

CECCO: On his back in the wood as if the leaves
Sung fairy balladry; then riding wild
Nowhither and alone; about the castle
Yearning, yet absent to soft speech and arms!
He'll drink, sir, and not know if it be wine!

CHARLES: So is he! but to-day he bold unsheathed
His skill and bravery.

CECCO: And did not crave
A boon of you?

CHARLES: None. But you put not ill
My thought to it. His aspiration flags——

CECCO: Ah, flags.

CHARLES: New wings it needs and buoyancy.
My trust in him is ripe: the fruit of it,
He shall be lord of Arta—total lord.

CECCO: He begged no softer boon?

CHARLES: Cunning! again?
Sleek questions of a sleeker consequence?

CECCO: It was, sir, only of Antonio.

CHARLES: Worm, you began so. Stretch now
to the end,
Or—will you?

CECCO: I would say—would ask—and hope
There is no thorny hint in it to vex you,
To prick your humor—may not he be sick,
Amorous, mellow sick upon some maid?

CHARLES: Have you so labored to this atom's
birth?

Is a boy's passion so new under the moon
You gape at it?

CECCO: But if, sir——

CHARLES: I had thought
Would start up in your words some Titan woe,
No human catapult could war upon!
Some dread colossal doom, frenzied to fall!
Were it he's traitor gnawing at my throne,
Or ready with some potent cruelty
To blight this tenderness new-sprung in me—
I would—even have listened!

(*Noise is heard at the postern. It is unlocked.* HÆMON *enters, and stops in consternation.*)

CHARLES: Keys? To—this?

HÆMON: I—have excuse.

CHARLES: Perchance also you have
Them to my gems and secrecies? Shall I
Not show their hiding?—rubies, and fair gold?

HÆMON: Mistake me not, my lord.

CHARLES: I could not: you
Have come at midnight—a most honest hour.
Enter this postern—a most honest way,
And seem most honest—Why, I could not, sir!

HÆMON: You wrong me, and have wronged me. I but come
To loose my sister.

CHARLES: As to-day you would
Have loosed her with a piercing—into death?

HÆMON: Rather, could I! Antonio—yet neither.
Since you, not he, are here, my passion melts
Into a plea. Humbly as manhood may—

CHARLES: This fever still?

HÆMON: This fever! Must I be
As ice while soiling flames leap out at her?
And passionless—as one cold in a trance?
Rigid while she in stealth is drugged to shame?
Be voiceless and be vain, unstung, and still?

I must wait softly while her innocence
Is drained as virgin freshness from the morn?—
Though he were twice Antonio and your son,
An emperor and a god, I would not!

CHARLES: Ever,
And ever bent upon Antonio?
Be not a torrent, boy, of rush and foam.
Be not, of roar!—Yet—look: Antonio?
You said Antonio?

HÆMON: Yes.

CHARLES (*troubled*): You did ill
To say it! He's my son.

HÆMON: I care not.

CHARLES: Have
You cause—a ground—some reason? Men should when
Suspicions curve their lips.

HÆMON: Cause! reason!

CHARLES: No:

He is my son. His flesh has memories
That would cry out and curdle him to madness,
Palsy and strangle every pregnant wish,
Or bring in him compassion like a flood.

HÆMON (*contemptuous*): O——?

CHARLES: Never!—Yet, a lurking at my brain!

Enter PAULA, *hurriedly.*

PAULA: My lord Antonio! my lady! (*Seeing* CHARLES.) O!

CHARLES (*strangely*): Come here.

PAULA: O, sir!

CHARLES (*taking her wrist*): Were you not in a haste?

PAULA: I—I—I do not know.

CHARLES: Girl!—Why do you
Drop fearful to your knees?

PAULA: 'Tis late, sir, late,
Let me go in!

CHARLES: You have a mistress who

Keeps quick temptation in her eyes and hair.
A shy mole too lies pillowed on her cheek—
Does she rest well?

PAULA: My lord——

CHARLES: Ah, you would say
She sometimes walks asleep: and you have come
To fetch her?

PAULA: Loose me, sir!

CHARLES: Or she has left
Her kerchief in some nook: you seek it?

PAULA: O,
Your eyes! your eyes!

CHARLES: I have a son: are his
Not like them?

PAULA: My wrist, sir!

CHARLES: It was night, then—night?
You could not see him clearly?

PAULA: Mercy!

CHARLES (*looking about*): Yet

Perchance he too walks in his sleep. Were it
Quite well if they have met—these two that walk?

PAULA: My lady, my sweet lady!

CHARLES (*releasing her*): Go, for she
Still wonderful may lie upon her couch,
One arm dropt whitely. If you prayed for her—
If you should pray for her—Something may chance:
There is so much may chance—we cannot know!

(PAULA *goes.*

(*Disturbed.*) This child who hath but dwelt about
her, touched
And coiled the mystery of her hair, has might
Almost too much!

HÆMON: You cloud me with these words.
Were they Antonio's——

CHARLES: If I but think
"Helena" must you link "Antonio" to it!
Can they not be, yet be apart? Will winds
Not bear them, and not sound them separate!

If angels cry one at the stars will they
But echo back the other?—This is froth—
The froth and fume of folly. You are thick
In falsity, and in disquietude.
Another rapture rules Antonio's eye,
Not Helena.

HÆMON: You know it—yet have led
Her to his arms?

CHARLES: His arms! Ah, mole to burrow
Thus under blind and muddy misbelief!
To mine is she come here. (*Terribly.*) Were he
a seraph,
And did from Paradise desire to fold her—
No mercy!—But, I will speak as a child,
As he who woke with Ruth fair at his feet;
Long have I gleaned amid the years and lone.
She shall glean softly now beside me—softly,
Till sunset fail in me and I am night.

HÆMON: This is a gin, a net, and I am fast!

CHARLES: A net to snare what never has been free?

HÆMON: Still must it be this tenderness lives false
Upon your lips.

CHARLES: "Must," say you, "must," yet stand——

HÆMON: Then shall he rest—lie easy down and rest
In treachery?

CHARLES: He——?

HÆMON: Yes.

CHARLES: You mean——?

HÆMON: Yes!—yes!

CHARLES: Antonio?

HÆMON: Is it not open?

CHARLES (*confusedly*): No:
Glooms start around me, glooms that seethe and cling.

HÆMON: This maid who called, did she come idly here?

You stir? you rouse?

CHARLES: A coldness runs in me.

HÆMON: And have not I come strangely on the hour!

CHARLES: It 'gins to burn!

HÆMON: Not entered a strange way?

CHARLES: You pause and ever pause upon my patience.

'Twill heave unbearably!

HÆMON: Then hear me, hear!—

Senseless against a bank I found a boy,

Hurled by some ruthless hoof. Near him this key

And writing——

CHARLES: Tell it!

HÆMON: That avows, mid lines

Clandestine of purport, Antonio

And Helena, under these shades at twelve——

CHARLES: You bring on me a furious desolation.
But Fulvia, ah, she——
HÆMON: Not there is trust!
She is aware and aids in his deceit.
This writing says it of her.
CHARLES: Fulvia? No!
No, no!—Though she had sudden whispers for him!
A lie!—Yet fast belief fixes its fangs
On me and will not loose me—for against
My hope she set a coldness and a doubt!
O woman woven through all fibres of me!
(*Starting up.*) But he——!
HÆMON: Ah then, it runs in you, the rush
And pang that answer mine?
CHARLES (*quietly*): If they are still——
HÆMON: Under these shades?
CHARLES: And—lips to lips——

HÆMON: Ah, God!
You will?—you will?
CHARLES: Hush! something—No, it was
But fate cried out in me, not any voice.
HÆMON: We must be swift.
CHARLES: It cries again. I will
Not listen! He's not flesh of me—not flesh!
A traitor is no son, nor was nor shall be!
Though it shriek desolation utterly
I will not listen!
HÆMON: Do not!
CHARLES: And to-day
He shook, ashen and clenched, remembering
The guilty secret in him!
HÆMON: Still he's free.
CHARLES: My words fell warm as tears—"A rift has come,
A rift, a smile, a breath"—men speak so when

They creep from madness up into some space
Whose element is love.

HÆMON: And will you sink
To a weak palsy—who should o'erwhelm
With penalty!

CHARLES (*rousing*): No! all and ever false
Was he who's so when most he should be true!
I will make treachery bitter to all time.
Bring dread on all to whom are given sons!
Down generations shall they peer and tremble,
Look on me as on majesties accursed!—
Search every shade—search, search! You stand as death.
I am in famine till he gives me groan!

(*They go in opposite directions.*

Enter FULVIA, *distressed, and* GIULIA.

FULVIA: He was with Hæmon?

GIULIA: On that seat.

FULVIA: Convulsed,
Yet passionless?
GIULIA: His words were low.
FULVIA: Why were
You not asleep?
GIULIA: I——
FULVIA: Did he beat his hands
Briefly—and then no more?
GIULIA: I was behind——
FULVIA: And could not see? But heard their names?
The Greek is still without?
GIULIA: My lady, yes.
FULVIA: Your voice is guilty. How came Hæmon in?
Answer me, answer! No, go quickly! If
The duke has entered now and sleeps! Or if——!

(*Words and swords are heard, then a shriek from* HELENA. CHARLES *rushes in furi-*

ous and wounded in the arm, followed by HELENA, ANTONIO, *who is dazed, and from the Castle side by* HÆMON, *guards, etc.*)

ANTONIO: You, you, sir? father? I knew it not, so swift
Your rage fell on me.

CHARLES (*to a guard*): Gaping, ghastly fool!
Do you behold him murderous and lay
No hand on him!

ANTONIO: But, sir——!

CHARLES: Let him not fawn
About me! Seize him! God forgives not Hell.
Not this blood only but my soul's be on him.

HELENA: O, do not, he——

CHARLES: Stand! stand! Touch me not with
Your voice or eyes or being! They are soft
With perfidy, and stole me to believe
There's sweetness in a flower, light in air,

And beauty in the innocence of earth.
Bind him! Leucadia's just cliff awaits
All traitors—'tis the law, they must be flung
Out on the dizzy and supportless wind.

FULVIA: But this shall never be! No, though your looks
Heave out with hate upon me.

CHARLES (*convulsed, then coldly*): You are dead,
And speak to me. Once you were Fulvia—
No more! And once my friend, now but a ghost
Whom I must gaze upon forgetlessly.
Obey, at once! and at to-morrow's sunset!

(ANTONIO *is taken and led out.*)

HELENA (*falling at* CHARLES' *feet*): You cannot, will not—O, he is your son
And loves you much!

CHARLES: Touch me not! touch me not!
(*To* HÆMON.) Lead her away—and quickly,

quickly, quickly! (HÆMON *goes with* HELENA *through the postern.*

Friends— friends — (*unsteadily*) I am—quite—
friendless now—? (*Clutching his wounded arm.*) Ah—quite! (*He faints.*)

FULVIA: Charles! Charles! my lord! return!
—A numbness
Has barred the way of soothing to his breast!

CURTAIN

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

ACT FOUR

Scene.—A chamber in the Castle, opening on the right to a hall, curtained on the left from another chamber. In the rear is a window through which may be seen silvery hills of olive resting under the late afternoon sun: by it a shrine. Enter the CAPTAIN *of the Guard and a* SOLDIER *from the Hall.*

SOLDIER: There is no more?

CAPTAIN: Not if you understand.

SOLDIER: That do I—every link of it! I've served
Under the bold de Montreal, and he
For stratagems—well, Italy knows him!

CAPTAIN: You must be quick and secret.

SOLDIER: As the end
Of the world!

CAPTAIN: Our duty's with the duke. But then
Antonio has our love.

SOLDIER: That has he! Ah,
That has he!

CAPTAIN: Well, be close. None must escape,
Remember, none be hurt. As for the princess,
We'll hear the chink of ducats with her thanks.

SOLDIER: Madonna save her!—The Judas of
a father
Who robs her rest!

CAPTAIN (*looking down the hall*): 'Tis she who
comes this way.
So go, and haste. But fail not.

SOLDIER: If I do,
Bury me with a pagan, next a Turk!
(*Goes.*

Enter FULVIA.

CAPTAIN: Princess—

FULVIA: Our plans grow to fulfilment—are
No way misplanted?

CAPTAIN: Lady, all seems now
Seasonable for their expected fruit.

FULVIA: No accident appears to threat and thwart them?

CAPTAIN: Doubt not a fullest harvest of your hope.
The duke himself shall for this deed at last
Have benediction.

FULVIA: May it be! He's quick,
Though quicker in forgetting. I will move
Him as I may.

CAPTAIN: The kind and wise assaults
Your words shall make must move him, gracious lady.

Enter HÆMON.

HÆMON: I seek the duke.

FULVIA (*dismissing* CAPTAIN *with a gesture*):
You would seek penitence
Were you less far in folly.

HÆMON (*as going*): O—if he's
Not here, then——

FULVIA: Sorrow too would strain your lips,
Not cold defiance.

HÆMON: Pardon: if you know,
Where is he?

FULVIA: Was it easy to o'erwhelm
Under the ruin of her dreams a sister?

HÆMON: Better beneath her dreams than under shame.

FULVIA: Your rashness cloaks itself in that excuse,
Your ruth, and your suspicion that has doomed
One innocent.

HÆMON: One innocent! His thought
Had but betrayal for her!

FULVIA: 'Tis the Greek
In you avows it, no true voice.
HÆMON: Then 'tis
My father murdered whose last moan I hear
Driven about me in this castle's gray
Cold spaces. And the dead speak not to lie.
FULVIA: No, no. You cannot brave your action with
The spur of that belief.
HÆMON: What want you of me?
FULVIA: This: ache and restlessness are on you.
HÆMON (*impatiently*): No.
FULVIA: And doubt begins in you that as a wolf
Will scent the wounded quarry of your conscience.
HÆMON: After he lured and wooed her under night
And secrecy?

FULVIA: Not running there will you
Escape its dread pursuit.

HÆMON: He frauded—duped
His father's trust!

FULVIA: Or there! But one refuge
Have you against its bitter ceaseless tooth,
And that above the wilds of self-deceit.

HÆMON: Why do you wind so sinuously about me?
No refuge can be from an hour that's done.
Shall we invert the glass or tilt the dial
To bring it back?

FULVIA: But if there were?

HÆMON: Where is
The duke—I will not bauble.

FULVIA: If there were?

HÆMON: I will no longer listen to the worm,
You set to feed upon me—torturing!

The sun melts to an end, and with the night
Antonio will not be.

FULVIA: Yet there is time.

HÆMON: The duke is fixed.

FULVIA: No matter: 'gainst the swell
And power of this peril you must lean.

HÆMON: I——?

FULVIA: Yes.

HÆMON: You have a plan?

FULVIA: One that is sure.

(*Steps are heard.*)

But through those curtains, quick. For more seek out
The Captain of the guard. The duke comes hither.

(HÆMON *goes through the curtains.*

CHARLES *enters, worn, dishevelled, and followed by* CECCO. *He sees* FULVIA *and pauses.*

FULVIA: I come to plead.

CHARLES. (*turning away*): Ah! Nature should have pled
With her your mother, 'gainst conception.

FULVIA: Your trust is causelessly withdrawn. Yet for
A breath again I beg it—for a moment!

CHARLES: A moment were too much—or not enough.
Is trust a flower of sudden birth we may
Bid bloom with a command?

FULVIA: Ah, that it were,
Or bloomed as amaranth in those we love,
Beyond all drought and withering of ill!
But hear me——!

CHARLES. Leave these words.

FULVIA: Will you not turn
Out of this rage?

CHARLES: Leave them, I say, and cease!

Still down the vortex of this destiny
I would not farther have you drawn.

FULVIA: Then from
It draw yourself!

CHARLES: Myself am but a hulk
Whose treasures have already been engulfed.

FULVIA: Yet shrink from it!

CHARLES: A son, a friend, a—No,
She was not mine!—I will not turn.

FULVIA: It is
Your fury that distorts us into guilt.
Although he will not render up his heart,
But flings you stony and unfilial speech,
Fearing for her——

CHARLES: Leave!

FULVIA: We——

CHARLES: Thrice have I said it!

FULVIA: Yet must I not until your will is wasted.

CHARLES (*angrily*): Ah!

(FULVIA *sighs then goes slowly.*)

CHARLES: Cecco!

CECCO: My lord?

CHARLES: The hour?

CECCO (*going to window*): It leans to sunset.

CHARLES: The sky—the sky?

CECCO: A murk moves slowly up.

CHARLES (*wearily*): There should be storm—
gloating of wind and grind
Of hopeless thunders. Lightnings should laugh
out
As tongues of fiends. There should be storm.
(*His head sinks on his breast.*)
(*Suddenly.*) Yet!—yet!——

CECCO: My lord?

CHARLES: The glow and glory of her seem
Dead in me!

CECCO: Of—the Greek?

CHARLES: And yearning has
Grown impotent—as 'twere a moment's folly,
A left and quickly quenched desire of youth
Kindled in me!—To youth alone love's sudden.

CECCO: Sir, dare I speak?

CHARLES: Speak.

CECCO: When Antonio——

CHARLES: Cease: but a whisper of his name and I
Am frenzy—frenzy—though the stillness burns
And bursts with it!

(CECCO *steps back. A pause.*)

CHARLES: The sun, how hangs it now?

CECCO (*going to window*): Above the bloody waving of the sea,
Eager to dip.

CHARLES (*staggering up*): Ah, I was in a foam——
Bitten by hounds of fury and despair!

Did you not, Fulvia, pleading for them say
They quailed but would not flee and leave me waste?

CECCO: She is not here, my liege.

CHARLES: Antonio!
Ah, boy! thou ever wast to me as wafts
Of light, of song, of summer on the hills!
Soft now I feel thy baby arms about me,
And all the burgeon of thy youth, ere proud
And cruel years grew in me, comes again
On wings and stealing winds of memory!

CECCO: O, then, sir——

CHARLES: Yes. Fly, fly! and stay the guard!
He must not—Ah!—down fearful fathoms, down
Into the roar!

(CECCO *starts. He stops him.*)

Yet he has flung me from
Immeasurable peaks, and I have sunk
Forevermore beneath hope's horizon.
Who falls so close the grave can rise no more.

CECCO: This your despair would wound him more than death.

Forget the girl.

CHARLES: She? Ah, my sullen, wild,
And gloomy pulse beat with a rightful scorn
Against the hours that sieged it. Stony was
Its solitude and fierce, bastioned against
All danger of quick blisses—till, with fury
For that mute tenderness which women's love
Lays on the desolation of the world,
She ravished it!—Yet now 'tis still and cold.

CECCO: But 'twas unknowingly.

CHARLES: A woman's smile
Never was luring, never, but she knew it,
As hawk the cruel rapture of his wings.

CECCO: She though is young, and youth——

CHARLES: Must pay with moan
The shriving!—Ah, the sun—the sun—where burns it?

CECCO: Upon a cloud whence it must spring
to night.

CHARLES: So low?

CECCO: Sir, yes.

CHARLES: Ah, 'tis? so low?

CECCO: Red now
It rushes forth.

CHARLES: A breathing of the world,
And then!—Antonio!

CECCO: Again a cloud
Withholds.

CHARLES: Antonio!

CECCO: It dips, my lord.

CHARLES (*frenzied*): O, will great Christ upon
it lay no fear!
Let it swoon down as if its sinking sent
No signal unto Death—and plunge, plunge thee,
Antonio, forever from the day!
Has He no miracle will seize it yet!

Nor will lend now His thunder to cry hold,
His lightning to flame off the hands that grasp,
Bidden to hurl thee o'er!

CECCO: 'Tis sunk!

CHARLES (*rushing to window*): Yes!—Yes!
(*Starting back horrified.*) The vision of
it! Ah,—see you not, see!
They lift him, swing him—Now! down, down,
down, down!
The rocks! the lash! the foam!
(*Sinks exhausted in his chair.* CECCO *pours
out wine.*)

Enter hurriedly, a SOLDIER.

SOLDIER: Great lord!

CECCO: What now!
It is ill-timed!

SOLDIER: Great lord, there's mutiny!

CECCO: And where?

SOLDIER: Hear me, great sir, there's mutiny!

CECCO: The town? the town?

CHARLES (*rousing*): Ay——?

SOLDIER: Mutiny! your haste!

CHARLES: O, mutiny.

SOLDIER: Sir, yes!

CHARLES: And do the ranks
Of hell roar up at me?—It is not strange.

SOLDIER (*confused*): The ranks of—pardon, lord.

CHARLES: Do the skies rage——?
They were else dead to madness.

SOLDIER: Sir, it is
Your guard beyond the gates.

CHARLES: 'Tis every throat
Of earth and realm unearthly has a cry
Against me and against!

SOLDIER: No, but a few——

CHARLES: You doubt it?—Are my eyes not bloody? Say!

SOLDIER: Sir! sir!

CHARLES: My lips then are not pale with murder
Bitterly done?

SOLDIER: Pale—no.

CHARLES: Yet have I killed;
Spoke death with them—not reasonless—yet death.
And all the lost have echoes of it: hear
You not a spirit clamor on the air?
Ploughing as storms of pain it passes through me.
Mutiny? Go. I could call chaos fair,
And fawn on infinite ruin—fawn and praise.

(SOLDIER *goes.*

Yet will not yield! (*To* CECCO.) My robes and coronet!

(CECCO *goes to obey.*

I'll sit in them and mock at greatness that
A passion may unthrone. If we weep not

Calamity will leave to torture us,
And fate for want of tears will thirst to death!

Enter CARDINAL.

Ah, priestly sir.

CARDINAL: Infuriate man!

CHARLES: Speak so.
I lust for bitterness.

CARDINAL: What have you done!

CHARLES (*shuddering, then smiling*): Watched the sun set. Did it not, think you, bleed
Unwontedly along the waves?

CARDINAL: O horror!
Horrible when a father slays and smiles!

CHARLES: Not so, lord Cardinal, not so!—but when
He slays and smileth not.

CARDINAL: Beyond all mercy!

CHARLES: Therefore I smile. Men should not mid the trite

Enchanting and vain trickery of earth
Till they no longer hope of it, or want.
Smiles should be kept for life's unbearable.

CARDINAL: Murderer!

CHARLES: Ah!

CARDINAL: Heretic!

CHARLES: Well.

(*Goes to shrine and casts it out the window.*)

CARDINAL: Fool! fool!

CHARLES: There are no wise men, O lord Cardinal.

CARDINAL: Heaven let Antonio's death under the sea
Make every wave a tongue against your rest,
And 'gainst the rock of this impenitence!

(CHARLES *listens as to something afar off.*)

No wind should blow that has not sting of it,
No light stream that it stains not!

CHARLES (*sighing*): You have loosed
Your robe, lord prelate—see.

CARDINAL: O stone! thou stone!

CHARLES: Have peace. A keener cry comes
up to me
Than frenzy can invoke: a vaster pain
Than justice from Omnipotence may call.

CARDINAL: My lips shall learn it.

CHARLES: "Father" moans it. "Father!"——
It is my ears' inheritance forever.

Enter FULVIA

FULVIA: Lord Cardinal, one of your servants
has
In quarrel been struck, and mortally 'tis feared.
Quickly to him: then I may plead of you
Escort to Rome.

CARDINAL: I do not understand.

FULVIA: But shall.

CARDINAL: To Rome?

FULVIA: Do not pause here to learn
With the dear minutes of a dying man.

(CARDINAL *goes.*

CHARLES: You baffle and bewilder.

FULVIA: Well.

CHARLES: You—?—Yes!
I am beat off by it.

FULVIA: Ten years of shelter
Have you held over me.

CHARLES: Ten years——

FULVIA: Whose days,
Whose every moment else had borne a torture.

CHARLES: Now——?

FULVIA: I, perhaps, must go.

CHARLES: Must?—Still I grope.

FULVIA: Must go! Though in this castle's aged calm
And melancholy dusk no shadow is
Or niche but may remember prayer for thee.

CHARLES: To Rome? You must?—I am under a spell.

FULVIA. We, thou and I, after the battle's foam
Or chase's tired return, often have breathed
The passionate deep hours away in rest
And sympathy.

CHARLES: Say on. Your voice—I marvel——

FULVIA: And at the dawn have looked and sighed, then slow
With quiet clasp of fingers turned apart.

CHARLES: You go?—But, on!—your tone—in it I feel——

FULVIA: Have we not fast been friends?

CHARLES: What hath your voice?

FULVIA: Such friends have we not been as grow up from
Eternity?

CHARLES: You say it, and I wake.

FULVIA: Such friends—till yesterday you——

CHARLES: Ah!

FULVIA: Changed sudden as the sea when cometh storm.

CHARLES: I had forgot—forgot!—the sun!—the sea!

The sea!—Antonio!—The cliff—the surf!

The shroud and funeral fury of the waves!

FULVIA: Be calm.

CHARLES (*rising excitedly*): I'll stay it! Cecco, our fleetest foot!

A rain of ducats if he shall outspeed

This doom on us. More! more! a flood of them,

If he——

FULVIA (*drawing him to his chair*): Be patient —calm.

CHARLES: I—I—remember,

'Tis night!

FULVIA: Yes, night.

CHARLES: The sun's no more! It hath
Gone down beyond all mercy and recall.

FULVIA: Beyond?—Ah!

CHARLES (*quickly*): Fulvia?

FULVIA: 'Tis hard to think!

CHARLES: You utter and he seemeth still of life.

FULVIA: He was a child in mimic mail clad out
When first this threshold poured its welcome to
me.

CHARLES: Softly you muse it, and call to your
eyes
No quailing nor a flame of execration!
You do not burst out on me? from me do
Not shrink as from an executioner?

FULVIA: I am a woman who in tears came to
Your strength, in tears depart.

CHARLES: And will not judge?
But fear me—fear, and flee?—You shall not go!

FULVIA: Perhaps——

CHARLES: Again "perhaps"—this calm "perhaps!"——
To Rome?—I say you shall not.

FULVIA: Yet should he,
Antonio, from those curtains come——

CHARLES: Should—should?
You speak not reasonably. Why do you say
"If he should come?"

FULVIA: Because——

CHARLES: You've touched
And led me trembling from reality!
Those curtains?—those?—just those?—You shall not go.

FULVIA: I will not then.

CHARLES: But something breaks from you,
And as an air of resurrection stirs.
Speak; on your words I wait unutterably.

FULVIA: Did not a soldier lately come, my lord,
Breathless with eager speech of mutiny——?

CHARLES: Well—well——?

FULVIA: Within your guard?

CHARLES: My guard? No—yes——
What do I see yet cannot in your words?

FULVIA: The mutiny was roused at my command.

CHARLES: Say it—say all!

FULVIA: To save you the mad blot
Of a son's blood.

CHARLES: Antonio——?

FULVIA: Lives!

CHARLES: Low—low——
Joy come too furious has piercing peril.
He lives?—You have done this? With these soft hands,
These little hands, held off the shears of Fate?
Have dared? and have not feared?

FULVIA: Your danger was
My fear—that, and no more.

CHARLES: He lives?—I have
No worth, no gratitude, no gift that may
Answer this deed—no glow, no eloquence
But would ring poor in rarest words of earth.
He lives?—Years yet are mine. Too brief they'll be
To muse with love of this!

FULVIA: No, no, my lord.

CHARLES: But where is he? Belief, tho' risen, strains
In me as if 'twere fast in cerements
That seeing must unbind.

FULVIA: Turn then, and see.

(ANTONIO *steps from the curtains.*)

CHARLES: Antonio!—boy! boy!

ANTONIO: My father! (*They embrace.*)

Re-enter CARDINAL.

CARDINAL: Princess,
If your decision and desire are still——

(*Sees* ANTONIO.)

FULVIA: Your eyes look upon flesh, lord Cardinal.

(*A cry is heard, then weeping.*)

ANTONIO (*startled*): Whose pain is this?—strangely it hurts me—strangely!

Enter CECCO *hastily, bearing robe and coronet.*

CECCO: My lord, the lady Helen's little maid——

(*Sees* ANTONIO. *Shrinks from him.*)

ANTONIO: What of her? Are you horrified to stone!

Her maid?—There are than risen dead worse things

And worse to dread!—her maid?

CECCO: Sir——

ANTONIO: Forth with it!

She direness of her mistress brings? some tale

That earth elsewhere abyssless gaped her up?

That butterfly or bud turn asp to bite her?

CECCO: Sir—she—the maid craves audience with the duke.

ANTONIO: Fetch her, and quickly.

(CECCO *goes.*

FULVIA: Reason, Antonio.
She will but whimper, tell what overmuch
Of grief her mistress makes for you: of tears
Your sunny coming will dry in her.

ANTONIO (*putting her aside*): These
Hours come not of any good, but are
Infected with resolved adversity.
This dread!——

FULVIA: They ever dread who have but quit
The shadow of some doom and the dismay.

Re-enter CECCO, *with* PAULA *weeping.*

ANTONIO: Girl! girl! Thy mistress?

PAULA (*shrinking*): O!——

ANTONIO: I am no ghost.
Thy mistress?

PAULA: Mary, Mother! (*Sinks praying.*)

ANTONIO (*lifting her up*): Look on me. See!
I have not been down in the grave, nor ev'n
A moment beyond earth. Do you not hear!

PAULA (*looking at him*): Sir!

ANTONIO: Tell me.

PAULA (*hysterically*): Go to her,
O, go to her.

ANTONIO: But, child——?

PAULA: She, O!—go seek her, O, she is——

ANTONIO: Where, Paula?

PAULA: Blind all day she moaned and wept.

ANTONIO: My Helena!

PAULA: And when the sun was gone,
Came quiet, kissed me—O, go seek her, sir!

ANTONIO: Kissed you——?

PAULA: Then to me gave these jewels. O!
And darkly cloaked stole out into the night.

CHARLES: Alone?

ANTONIO: Whither, quick, whither?

PAULA: Ah, I do
Not know: but she——

ANTONIO: Pray, pray, tell out your dread.

PAULA: Last night she said, "My heart is in my lord
Antonio's to beat or cease with it."
I learned her words—they seemed so pretty.

CHARLES (*gasping*): Ah!

ANTONIO: Why do you gasp?—Paula——

CHARLES: If she—the cliff!

ANTONIO: The cliff! The—?

(*Staggers dizzily, then rushes out.*

CHARLES: Let one go with him—bring
Us what hath passed—hath passed.

(*A* SOLDIER *goes.*

PAULA (*with uncontrollable terror*): My lady!

CHARLES: Child,
I cannot bear thy voice upon my heart!

It hath a tone—a clutch—no more, no more!
I cannot bear it! We must wait. No hap
Has been—no hap, I think—surely no hap.

Enter BARDAS *deprecatingly, followed by* ANTONIO.

BARDAS: Antonio! not in the sea? You live?

ANTONIO: I say, where is she?

BARDAS: You are mortal?

ANTONIO (*groaning with impatience*): O
This utter superstition! (*Pricking his arm.*) Is
it not blood?

BARDAS: You live! and live? but let her think
your death!
You let her! still devising for yourself
Safety and preservation!

ANTONIO: She's not safe?

BARDAS: O, safe—if she had shrift!

CHARLES (*hoarsely*): The dead are so!

BARDAS: Ay, so.

ANTONIO: And none above the grave?—no answer?

BARDAS: She came unto the cliff amid her tears—

Her being all into one want was fused,
You down the wave to follow.

ANTONIO: But you grasped——?
You held her?

BARDAS: Yes——

ANTONIO: Then—well?

BARDAS: She had a phial.

ANTONIO: God! God!

BARDAS: Out of her breast she drew it swift,
And instant of it drank.

ANTONIO: Drank? and she fell?
No?—no?—Ah but you dashed it from her lips?
She did but taste?——

BARDAS: Only: and then——

ANTONIO: More? more?

BARDAS: "Is 't not enough," she pled to me,
"Enough
That I must wander the cold way of death
Unto his arms? Go hence! There is no rest.
I will go down and clasp him, drift with him
To some unhabited gray ocean vale
God hath forgot. There will we dwell away
From destiny and weeping, from despair!"

CHARLES: You left her?

BARDAS: As I held her piteous hand
Came revellers who saw us—jested her
Of taking a new love. She broke my grasp——

ANTONIO: And leapt?—down the wide air?

BARDAS: Swifter than all
Prevention.

ANTONIO: Helena! O Helena!
That all thy loveliness should fare to this,
Thy glory go in dark calamity!

BARDAS: I saw her as she leapt and until death
Shall see no more.

ANTONIO (*drawing*): Blot it from you! Her face,
Her sorrow and her fairness shall not stand
Imprisoned in your eye, tho' 'twere to cry
Relentlessly your crime.—But no—but no!

(*Sheathing his sword, he pauses, then staggers suddenly out.*)

PAULA: Let me go to my lady!

CHARLES: Still her! She
Forever hath a fluttering, a cry,
Undurably. It presses the lone air
With sensitive and aching agony.

PAULA (*witlessly, in tears*): I know thy song, my lady, I know, I know!
'Twas pretty and 'twas strange, but now I know.
(*Sings.*) Sappho! Sappho!
In maiden woe

(Let alone love, it spurns and burns!)
Wept—wept, and leapt—
O love is so!
(Let alone love, it burns!)
My lady! O my lady! my sweet lady!

(*She is led out.*)

FULVIA: This is most sad—most sad, and pitiful.

CHARLES: I cannot bear her voice upon my heart.

Enter AGABUS *gazing into the air.*

Again this monk? this dog of death?—and now?

AGABUS: My trusty Shadow. (*Laughs madly.*)
Ha, he has been here!
My king o' the worms and all corruption!—
(*Approaching* CHARLES.) Lovers, and lovers!
O she leapt as 'twere
To Christ and not sin's Pit! And he is gone
To follow her! The devil's nine wits are
Too many!

(*Wanders about.*)

FULVIA: My lord! Your limbs are frozen,
And bloodlessly you stand! Move, rouse, O
breathe!
It is not truth but madness that he speaks.

(*A cry and clanking of armor are heard in the Hall. A* SOLDIER *bursts into the chamber.*)

SOLDIER: O duke! O duke! (*Sinks to his knee.*)

CHARLES (*gazes at him, struggling to speak*):
Rise—go—and, if thou canst—
To pray.

SOLDIER: O, sir——!

CHARLES: You have no tidings.

SOLDIER: Sir——

CHARLES (*desperately*): None, fool! but come
to say what silence groans,
What earth numb and in deadness raves to me.
To tell Antonio hath gone out and o'er
A precipice hath stepped for sake of love.

This is not tidings—hath it not on me
Been fixed forever? It is older than
Despair, as old as pain! (*To* HÆMON, *who has entered.*) Your sister——

BARDAS: Hæmon——!

CARDINAL: Hold him not in this anguish.

FULVIA: She and our
Antonio have left us to our tears.

(HÆMON *stands motionless.*)

CHARLES: Let no one groan. I say let no one groan—
Fury on him that groans! (*He blindly rocks to and fro.*)

FULVIA: My lord!

CHARLES (*taking her hand*): Well—come.

(*As in a trance.*)

There's much to do. We will think of the dead.
Perchance 'twill keep them near us: speak to them,
And they may answer while we wait, may float

Dim words on moonbeams to us. O for one
That shall sound of forgiveness and of rest!
(*More wildly.*)
O I have started on the mountain's brow
A tremor that has loosed the avalanche;
And penitence too late—too late—too late—
Was powerless as flowers along its path!

(*He sinks back into his chair and stares hopelessly before him.*)

CURTAIN.

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW

AN INITIAL FINE OF 25 CENTS

WILL BE ASSESSED FOR FAILURE TO RETURN THIS BOOK ON THE DATE DUE. THE PENALTY WILL INCREASE TO 50 CENTS ON THE FOURTH DAY AND TO $1.00 ON THE SEVENTH DAY OVERDUE.

APR 22 1946

LD 21-100m-12,'43 (8796s)

U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES

C045593767

YB 31974

300370

Rice

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW

AN INITIAL FINE OF 25 CENTS

WILL BE ASSESSED FOR FAILURE TO RETURN THIS BOOK ON THE DATE DUE. THE PENALTY WILL INCREASE TO 50 CENTS ON THE FOURTH DAY AND TO $1.00 ON THE SEVENTH DAY OVERDUE.

APR 22 1946

LD 21-100m-12,'43 (8796s)

U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES

C045593767

YB 31974

300370

Rice

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY